

Kennedy Defends Activities of CIA in South Viet-Nam

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Says Agency's Operations Have Not Violated U.S. Policies

BY ROBERT THOMPSON
Los Angeles Times News Service

WASHINGTON—President Kennedy declared Wednesday that it is unfair and untrue to accuse the Central Intelligence Agency of conducting an independent operation in South Viet-Nam in violation of U.S. policy.

Defending the CIA at his defense Robert S. McNamara press conference, Mr. Kennedy and Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he could assure the nation "flatly" that the agency has not gone its separate way in South Viet-Nam, as has been reported.

While he conceded that the agency has made mistakes, Mr. Kennedy said it has operated under his own close control and the instructions of CIA director John McCone and the National Security Council.

Reports to the contrary, the President declared, are "wholly untrue."

Reviews Record

He explained that his judgment was based on a review of the CIA record for the last nine months and frequent meetings with McCone.

In addition, Mr. Kennedy said there is policy agreement about America's course in South Viet-Nam among top officials of the White House, the Departments of State and Defense and the CIA and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge in Saigon.

"It is particularly true, the President said, since the mission to Viet-Nam last week of Secretary of De-

Tact Admission

In discussing the transfer of Richardson, whom he described as a "very dedicated public servant," Mr. Kennedy tacitly admitted that Richardson has been the chief of CIA operations in South Viet-Nam. Richardson has been listed officially, however, as a special assistant to the ambassador.

Although Mr. Kennedy did not discuss the ruling Ngo family directly, he stated that there have been no personnel changes in Viet-Nam in the last month which would aid the war effort.

He remarked that "we are still dealing with the same problems we were dealing with a month ago." At that time, he criticized President Ngo Dinh Diem for the free rein given to his brother,

Ngo Dinh Nhu, and Mme. Nhu.

Turning from Viet-Nam to Latin America, Mr. Kennedy made it clear that the United States strongly disapproves of military coups, such as those which have upset constitutional governments in the Dominican Republic and Honduras in the last two weeks.

'Communist Seedbeds'

He said the United States and other hemisphere nations are using their influence to restore democracy to both small nations.

Mr. Kennedy described military juntas as "the seedbeds from which communism ultimately springs up."

The issue arose because Edwin M. Martin, assistant secretary of state for Inter-American affairs, stated last weekend that the newer juntas in Latin America are more "civilized" than those of the past and more inclined to adopt reforms and move toward restoration of constitutional government.

Explaining Problems

Mr. Kennedy said Martin merely was attempting to explain some of the problems of Latin America and to give reasons why the coups took place.

But, the President said, the United States is "opposed to coups because we think that they are defeating, self-defeating and defeating for the hemisphere."

It is because of this opposition, Mr. Kennedy explained, that the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Honduras and the Dominican Republic.